Cell One customers of Pune and Rs. 44.40 Crores have already been collected till 31.03.2004, as such the service did not incur heavy losses.

(b) However, some customers have defrauded Pune Telecom by obtaining Cell One connections under fake identity. These customers obtained Cell One connections by using fake ration cards, PAN cards and passport etc. as proof of residence. The mobile connections were used by them for making foreign calls. It is estimated that the amount involved in these cases is to the extent of Rs.4.18 Crores. FIR has been lodged against these persons with the Crime Branch and the police investigation is in progress. Six persons have already been arrested.

(c) Investigations is in progress and complicity of any BSNL employee has not been detected so far.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Cheating by postal employees

†98. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that agents in connivance with post office employees are cheating the people opting for various saving schemes in post offices at large scale;

(b) whether it is also a fact that no timely action is being taken despite officials are reported in this regard by the people; and

(c) if so, the action taken by Government to punish the erring persons and to return the amount to such victims and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir. Some instances have come to notice in which agents, in connivance with postal employees, have cheated people opting for various Savings Schemes in Post Offices.

(b) No, Sir. Detailed investigation of each such case is done and appropriate action is taken against defaulting postal employees as well as agents.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) Cases are also reported to police for investigation. In addition to disciplinary action against postal officials found involved, steps are initiated for cancellation of the agency of the agents. Besides, claims of defrauded investors are settled.

Modernisation of services of post offices

99. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any detailed exercise has been undertaken to review the role and functions of the 150 year old institution of the post office, having a large work force and vast distribution network spread over deep into the interiors of the country, in the wake of the emerging competitive courier companies and the internet rapidly taking over the traditional postal functions; and

(b) if so, the results thereof and plan of action drawn up to re-define the business of the postal services to ensure that the consumers get substantial value from products and do not migrate to other communication channels?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) To give a focused attention to development of mail business products in the changing scenario, and to make use of opportunities being created by new technologies, a Business Development Directorate has been set up in the Department of Posts. It aims at developing new products and services as per the continually evolving needs of the different segments of customers and to utilize the work force of the Department and the retail network of post offices in the country for the promotion and expansion of such new products and services.

To meet the competition from couriers, business products like Speed Post, Express Parcel Post and Business Post have been introduced. A number of value additions, like free pick up, credit facility, volume-based discounts, door delivery, on line track and trace system, as also pre-mailing activities have been introduced.

Retail network of the Department of Posts have been leveraged for providing new services and generating additional revenue.